

DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT

1. REASON FOR ISSUE: To revise Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) directives management policy, formerly contained in VA Manual MP-1, Part II, Chapter 14, Policy and Procedures for VA Administrative Issues. This directive implements the recommendations of the Directives Management Task Force report distributed with Secretary's Numbered Memorandum 00-92-11.
2. SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES: This directive sets forth the policies and responsibilities for managing and distributing directives under the VA Directives Management System (DMS). The directive contains:
 - a. Identification of the three types of media used by the VA DMS to establish mandatory policies, procedures, and other requirements;
 - b. Policy statements regarding a new numbering system for directives and handbooks based on function rather than originating office;
 - c. A 30-day review, comment, and concurrence period for approving directives, handbooks, and notices;
 - d. A requirement to review all directives and handbooks every 3 years to certify their accuracy; and
 - e. Responsibilities for implementing and managing the DMS.
- NOTE: Paragraph 5 of this directive contains definitions that are important to a full understanding of the new DMS. Significantly, the term "directive" is redefined as a document that contains Departmentwide policies only. Procedures and/or operational requirements are contained in "handbooks."
3. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: IRM Policy and Standards Service (721), Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Resources Management.
4. RELATED HANDBOOK: VA Handbook 6330, Directives Management Procedures.
5. RESCISSIONS: Partial rescissions of OI-1, Part I, Chapter 28, dated April 1981; and MP-1, Part II, Chapter 14, dated May 1, 1981 (except for paragraph 7, "Required Publication of VA Regulatory or Nonregulatory Administrative Issuances In The Federal Register," and the three appendices).

CERTIFIED BY:

BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY
OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

/s/

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/s/

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VA DIRECTIVE 6330

DIRECTIVES MANAGEMENT

1. PURPOSE. This directive provides Department-wide policy for VA's DMS and implements the provisions found in the Federal Information Resources Management Regulation (FIRMR), section 201-9.103. The VA DMS includes directives, handbooks, and notices and is the official means by which Department-wide policies, procedures, requirements, and other information of general applicability will be issued to VA employees. The DMS does not include regulations. Procedures for implementing the policies in this directive are found in VA Handbook 6330, Directives Management Procedures. While each administration, office of Assistant Secretary, and other key office will have the opportunity to adapt the Department-wide formats and structures to their directives management programs, it is strongly recommended that they adopt the formats and structures found in this directive and handbook as their own.

2. POLICY

a. The term "administrative issues" and the publications associated with administrative issues that established mandatory policies, procedures, and other requirements, such as manuals, circulars, numbered letters, and numbered memoranda, will no longer be used. The VA DMS uses only three types of media:

(1) Directives. These documents prescribe mandatory Department- or administration-wide policies. They may be permanent or temporary. If the policies are temporary, e.g.,

for one-time reports or data collections, an expiration or rescission date will be specified. Text of directives should be limited to emphasize their use as media to convey policy only. However, if it makes sense from the users perspective, short procedures may be included as an appendix to the directive.

(2) Handbooks. These documents prescribe mandatory Department-wide procedures or operational requirements implementing policies contained in directives. Like directives, they may be permanent or temporary. They may be of any length and will be structured to meet requirements. This term will not be used for any other publication.

(3) Notices. These documents announce or provide important information involving, or of interest to, more than one administration, office of Assistant Secretary, or other key office, and to make official announcements. Examples include special events, appointments of senior management personnel, and major organizational changes. A notice will carry a rescission date of no more than 6 months.

b. Non-directives. Pamphlets, information bulletins, information letters, and program guides are used to provide information and guidance for informational purposes only; they do not require action or govern conduct or procedures.

NOTE: DMS issues must be coordinated through the organization's respective Directives Management Officer (DMO) and/or Publications Control Officer (PCO).

c. DMS documents which contain those categories of information described in the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 USC 552(a)(1)) will be published in the Federal Register for public notice when issued, revised, or repealed, as required by that section of the FOIA.

d. Identification and numbering of directives and handbooks will use a classification system based on function (subject) rather than organization. (See VA Handbook 6330, app. A.)

e. Issues published by the administrations, offices of the Assistant Secretaries, or other key offices should not repeat material published in Government-wide or Department-wide issues that are distributed to (or can be economically obtained for) all Department personnel who need them.

f. VA directives, handbooks, and notices will follow established formats and procedures found in VA Handbook 6330.

g. The review of a proposed directive, handbook, or notice requiring comment and/or concurrence outside the originating office will be completed within 30 calendar days from date of receipt. If concurrence/nonconcurrence cannot be provided within this time period, a written request for an extension will be submitted, stating briefly why an extension is necessary and requesting a specific amount of additional time. Detailed

information concerning review, comment, and concurrence procedures is found in VA Handbook 6330, paragraph 6.

h. Directives, handbooks, and notices will be approved and signed in accordance with MP-1, Part I, Chapter 1, Written Communications - Approval Authorities.

i. Directives and handbooks will be reviewed and updated or certified every 3 years to ensure that obsolete material is rescinded using procedures found in VA Handbook 6330, paragraph 8.

j. Distribution and maintenance of printed material will be accomplished through the use of an automated distribution system.

k. It is VA policy to encourage the development and use of state-of-the-art automation (e.g., electronic publishing, compact disk/read only memory, on-line systems) in the preparation, coordination, and dissemination of directives and other publications. Policies and guidance issued by the Joint Committee on Printing and Government Printing Office will be followed.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

a. Secretary of Veterans Affairs. The Secretary or Deputy Secretary will:

(1) Ensure that an effective VA DMS is established.

(2) Approve a DMS document when:

(a) There is a change in VA's basic mission, objectives, or policies;

(b) The document itself is used as a mechanism for delegating the Secretary's authority; or

(c) The policies or procedures govern the benefits, rights, or responsibilities of veterans, their beneficiaries, or members of the public.

b. Assistant Secretary for Finance and Information Resources Management (AS/FIRM). The AS/FIRM, as VA's Chief Information Resources Officer (CIRO), will (through the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Resources Management (DAS/IRM)):

(1) Develop policy and procedures for VA's DMS including development of standards and guidelines for writing, coordinating, and formatting directives;

(2) Issue changes to this directive that are necessary to implement and manage VA's DMS;

(3) Certify in writing all Department-wide directives and handbooks. This certification does not necessarily signify that the signer is the official responsible for the policies, procedures, and requirements contained in the document, but that the document is an appropriate VA policy that meets the DMS requirements, and has been reviewed, commented on, and concurred in by appropriate VA elements;

(4) Incorporate automation into every aspect of VA's DMS, including processing and distribution of directives, handbooks, and notices;

(5) Maintain official history files for all Department-wide directives, handbooks, and notices approved by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, or other key officials;

(6) Designate a Department Directives Management Officer (DMO);

(7) Advise and assist administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, and other key officials in the preparation of directives, handbooks, and notices, and provide necessary training in directives management;

(8) Develop and maintain a master schedule for review of directives and handbooks;

(9) Conduct ongoing Department-wide reviews of directives and handbooks to ensure that DMS policy and procedures are effectively carried out; and

(10) Develop and issue policy and procedures governing the distribution of DMS documents and other publications, and manage, maintain, or change as necessary, an automated distribution system which controls the initial distribution quantities of DMS documents.

c. Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration. The Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration (through the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration) will:

(1) Maintain and publish an index to VA's DMS documents and other publications;

(2) Provide Department-wide printing, reproduction, electronic publishing, and distribution support;

(3) Provide design and printing support for nondirective, informational publications; and

(4) Establish a Department-wide design program through the development and issuance of VA Graphics Standards Manual M-03-1.

d. Administration Heads, Assistant Secretaries, and Other Key Officials. Administration heads, Assistant Secretaries, and other key officials will:

- (1) Issue only directives, handbooks, and notices when disseminating required, mandatory policies or procedures;
- (2) Establish a DMS for directives under their jurisdiction (including field facilities, if appropriate), under the provisions of this directive, and designate one or more DMOs or Publications Control Officers (PCO) to manage the DMS in accordance with the provisions of VA Handbook 6330;
- (3) Obtain concurrences, approve and sign directives, handbooks, and notices when they are solely responsible for the program area covered by the particular issue;
- (4) Ensure that all directives, handbooks, and notices, developed in their areas of jurisdiction, meet the requirements of the DMS, as set forth in this directive and related handbook;
- (5) Provide training in directives management by assisting those who prepare, coordinate, or approve directives to apply established policies, requirements, and guidelines;
- (6) Plan, organize, and schedule VA directives, handbooks, and notices for publication, review, and certification;
- (7) Maintain the official history file for each directive, handbook, or notice they approve for their respective organizational element. Official history files of Department-wide directives, handbooks, or notices signed by the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, Assistant Secretaries, or other key officials will be maintained by the Department Records Officer in the office of the DAS/IRM;
- (8) Review, in accordance with an established schedule, all active directives and handbooks for which their organization is responsible, rescind those that are obsolete, and maintain lists of those that are current;
- (9) Approve or disapprove requisitions for printing and reproduction of directives, handbooks, notices (including photocopying), stock replenishments, and distribution;
- (10) Encourage the use of the most economical processes when extra-cost features such as covers, illustrations, colors, tabs, indexes, double-spacing, one-side printing, or more frequent periodical distributions are requested;
- (11) Assign distribution codes to all recurring directives and handbooks under their jurisdiction (see VA Manual MP-1, Part II, Chapter 16, Distribution and Maintenance of Publications);

(12) Designate authorized distribution points in VA Central Office and notify the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Administration of all additions, deletions, and changes (see VA Manual MP-1, Pt. II, Ch. 16);

(13) Maintain mailing lists for external distributions and ensure that lists are current; and

(14) Provide initial distribution and resupply of publications to facilities, authorized distribution points, and external recipients including national cemeteries or other out based facilities for which publications services are provided.

4. REFERENCES

a. MP-1, Part I, Chapter 1, "Written Communications - Approval Authorities."

b. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 9, "Printing and Reproduction."

c. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 10, "Correspondence."

d. MP-1, Part II, Chapter 16, "Distribution and Maintenance of Publications."

e. MP-5, Part I, Chapter 790, "Services to Employees (General)."

f. MP-6, Part XIV, Supplement 7.1, "Field Facilities Procedures for Requisitioning Forms and Form Letters."

g. M-03-1, "Graphics Standards Manual."

h. I-03-1, "VA Publications Index."

i. VA Handbook H-70-1, "VA Correspondence Handbook."

j. VA Catalog 1-P, "Publications Catalog LOG I."

k. VA Catalog 2, "VA Catalog of Recurring Publication Code Numbers."

l. Federal Information Resources Management Regulation (FIRMR) (41 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 201).

m. National Archives and Records Administration Regulations (36 CFR Ch. XII, Pt. 1222).

n. OMB Circular A-130, "Management of Federal Information Resources."

5. DEFINITIONS

a. Administration. A generic term used to identify one of the three major VA operational elements, i.e., VHA; VBA; or NCS. When VHA, VBA, and NCS are referred to as a group, the term "administrations" may be used.

b. Automated distribution system. A centralized Department-wide system used to control the distribution and maintenance of printed material.

c. Department. A generic reference to the entire Department of Veterans Affairs which includes VA Central Office and all field facilities.

d. Directives. Documents that prescribe mandatory Department-or administration- wide policies. They may be permanent or temporary. If the policies are temporary, e.g., for one-time reports or data collections, an expiration or rescission date will be specified. Text of directives should be limited to emphasize their use as media to convey policy only. However, if it makes sense from the users perspective, short procedures may be included as an appendix to the directive.

e. Directives Management Officer (DMO). The individual responsible for maintaining the Directives Management System (DMS) within an organization or other area of jurisdiction.

f. Directives Management System (DMS). The official means by which policies, procedures, requirements, and other information of general applicability are issued within VA. The VA DMS implements the provisions of the FIRMR, chapter 201, subchapter B. The DMS includes directives, handbooks, and notices, but does not apply to regulations, nondirectives, or other written communications issued primarily to and for the public.

g. Handbooks. Documents that prescribe mandatory Department-wide procedures or operational requirements implementing policies contained in directives. Like directives, they may be permanent or temporary. They may be of any length and will be structured to meet requirements. This term will not be used for any other publication.

h. Nondirectives. Pamphlets, information bulletins, information letters, and program guides used to provide information and guidance for informational purposes only; they do not require action or govern conduct or procedures.

i. Notices. Documents that announce or provide important information involving, or of interest to, more than one administration, office of Assistant Secretary, or other key office, and to make official announcements. Examples include special events, appointments of senior management personnel, and major organizational changes. A notice will carry a rescission date of no more than 6 months. (NOTE: This term is

different from and is not related to the term "notice" as used by the Office of the Federal Register.)

j. Transmittal Sheet. The first page of a directive or handbook. It identifies the reason for issue; contents of the issue or major changes; related directives and/or handbooks; responsible office; rescission date, if applicable; any affected rescissions; and filing instructions, if any.